

INTENSIVE SCARE

The Tories' racist lies about 'health tourists' are helping kill the NHS >>Pages 10&11



Inequality rises, but our exploitation gives us power >>Pages 14&15

What does class mean today?



Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2541 | 15-21 February 2017 | socialistworker.co.uk

DEFEND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**WELCOME
REFUGEES**



Refugee children play in a disused airport turned camp in Greece (above, PICTURE: PA), US president Donald Trump railing against refugees in one of his campaign rallies last year (right, PICTURE: GAGE SKIDMORE)

JOIN THE PROTESTS ON MONDAY

DONALD TRUMP

Growing anger at Trump is trouble for Theresa May

A TIDE of hatred for US president Donald Trump has isolated Theresa May in her insistence on bringing the bigot-in-chief to Britain.

A day of protests is set to take place across Britain on Monday of next week as MPs debate Trump's planned state visit—make sure you join one of them.

>>Page 3

REFUGEES



Vile Tories close child refugees' route to safety

THE SAME Tory government that's opening the door to Donald Trump slammed it in the face of lone child refugees last week.

Popular outrage previously forced the Tories to accept Labour peer Alf Dubs' call to take in child refugees—they must feel that pressure again.

>>Page 5

LABOUR

Attacks on Corbyn give Tories a free ride on Brexit

THE TORIES should be in more trouble than they are.

Jeremy Corbyn can only save his leadership if he breaks out of Westminster to lead a mass movement against austerity and the racist future offered by Theresa May and her friend in the White House.

>>Page 6



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'We all have this suspicion that he lies a lot'

Republican Senator Al Franken on Donald Trump

'President Agent Orange'

Rapper Busta Rhymes has a swipe at Trump at the Bafta awards

'A photo that exposes how cushy life can be in Britain's jails'

The Daily Mail rails against prisoners eating cereal

'He also has four roll-on deodorants, a tea caddy, mouthwash, cartons of milk and salad dressing'

The Mail works itself into a frenzy

'Just not engaging. And answers were 'like' basic'

Restaurant assistant manager Shantel Wesson's way of telling applicant Megan Dixon she didn't get a job—by text

'We're very proud of singing the national anthem'

Tom Watson, Labour deputy leader, is a proud patriot



Utterly Nuttall-lie. I can't believe Ukip isn't racist! It is

UKIP LEADER Paul Nuttall seems to be easily confused. He is Ukip's candidate in the Stoke-on-Trent Central by-election due next week

He faces a fraud investigation after being accused of putting the wrong address on his nomination form.

It seems Nuttall wasn't really sure where he lived. A Stoke address appeared on the form, while Nuttall was living 60 miles away in Merseyside.

Nuttall admitted he had never been to the Stoke address. Defending himself, he claimed the house would be his home "for the rest of the campaign".

But this has now turned out to be inaccurate too. Nuttall has now been forced to leave the house after "a series of incidents" including

"hate mail" being posted through the letter box.

Nuttall is also confused about which six towns make up Stoke—failing to name them in a radio interview last week.

And doubt has been cast on his claim that he was present at the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster.

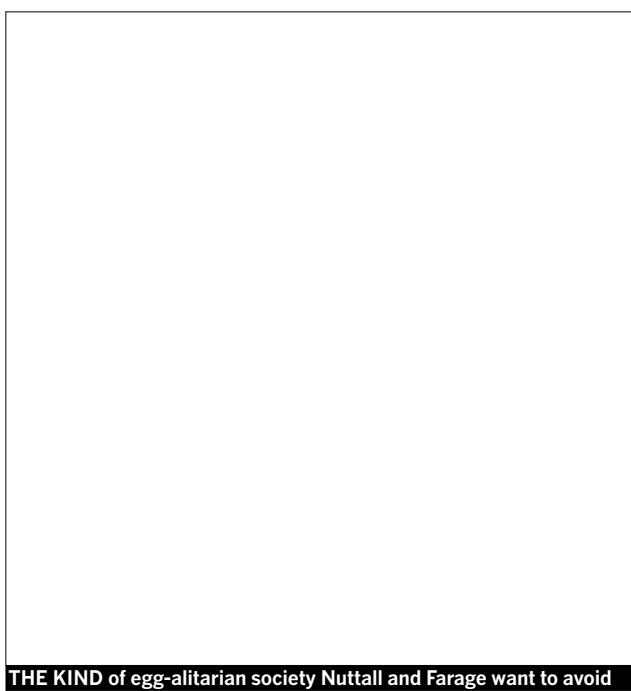
One of his former teachers said his school identified boys who had survived the disaster to give them support.

Nuttall wasn't one of them. And a "good friend" of Nuttall said he had never spoken about Hillsborough.

Nuttall is also confused about what he thinks of the NHS.

He previously celebrated "privatisation" in the health service.

Now he claims he has changed his mind.



THE KIND of egg-alitarian society Nuttall and Farage want to avoid

FORMER BANK of England governor Mervyn King has exposed the contempt the establishment holds Leave voters in.

King said he was told "if you even contemplate voting for Brexit, you must be either ignorant, uneducated, stupid or a racist".

It's a shame some on the left echo this patronising view of ordinary people.

Mervyn King

TERESA MAY'S new grammar schools could exclude 90 percent of children.

Existing grammars aim to accept 25 percent of children.

Yet a meeting of ministers, education advisers and the Grammar School Heads' Association discussed "a narrower ability range more like the top 10 percent".

Tory toffs show the party's true colours

THERESA MAY claims the Tories stand for everyone, not just the privileged few.

But Ronald Coyne doesn't seem to have got the message.

The University of Cambridge's Conservative Association was forced to throw him out after he burned a £20 note in front of a homeless man.

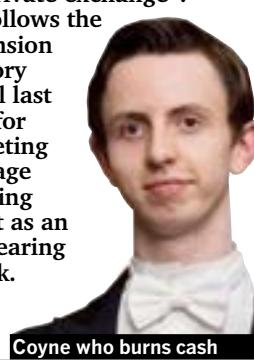
But maybe Coyne was just following tradition.

Burning a £50 note in front of a homeless man is an initiation ceremony for people to get into Oxford university's Bullingdon Club.

Former members include ex prime minister David Cameron and foreign secretary Boris Johnson.

BREXIT minister David Davis also showed the Tories' true colours last week. Following reports that he tried to kiss shadow home secretary Diane Abbott, he texted another Tory, "I am not blind." A spokesman for Davis said it was a "jocular and private exchange".

It follows the suspension of a Tory official last week for retweeting an image depicting Abbott as an ape wearing lipstick.



Coyne who burns cash

Billionaires' boat takes the biscuit

POOR billionaires.

They are really suffering as a result of the crisis. So much so that they are having to make do with a mere £250 million superyacht.

The yacht, Quintessentially One, will be the length of two football pitches. Only the richest will be able to access it.

It will offer restaurants, bars, a golf green, theatre, cinema room, library, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a spa and a gym. Its maiden voyage is planned for 2019, when it is expected to visit the Monaco Grand Prix,

Cannes Film Festival and Rio Carnival. To be a member you have to be invited—and pay.

Aaron Simpson of Quintessentially, which is building the yacht, said, "It will be the world's largest floating private membership club." He added that it offers a "wonderful way to meet the demands of Quintessentially's global members".



Quintessentially One
Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 71327
London
SE11 9BW

Soames rolling in it thanks to security firms

TWO PRIVATE security firms recently released figures showing they won government contracts worth £58.3 million since 2012.

One of them, Canadian security firm GardaWorld, was given work worth £49.6 million.

Tory MP Sir Nicholas Soames—a former armed services minister—has worked as a paid adviser to both firms.

GardaWorld pays Soames "a monthly salary of £9,166.67 for an expected commitment of 15 hours" according to the register of MPs' interests.

STREETING'S BLEATINGS

WES STREETING is nominally a Labour MP. Troublemaker is running an occasional series on his wisdom

When asked where he would travel in a time machine Streeting said, "I might take a time machine back to 2010 and tell David Miliband to do a bit more work on getting a few more second preferences". Exciting choice!

Sam Cam gets ahead, with a man's backing

THE TIMES devoted an entire page to promoting Samantha Cameron's new clothing business, Cefinn, on Monday of this week.

Under the heading "Analysis" it reported, "Cefinn's clean lines will resonate with the 'real women' its creator wants to attract."

And like anything women do, the support of a man was credited for it.

Cameron gushed that her husband is "unbelievably supportive".

She said, "On the days I go home and say, 'I don't think I can do this, darling,' he's like, 'Come on, glass of wine, you can do it!'"

Get in touch with Socialist Worker



Email reports@
socialistworker.co.uk
Web www.socialistworker.co.uk
Facebook "Socialist Worker (Britain)"
Twitter @socialistworker



Newsdesk
Circulation
020 7840 5601



Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 71327
London
SE11 9BW

Trouble for Theresa May as anger at Trump grows

A TIDE of hatred for US president Donald Trump has isolated Theresa May in her insistence on bringing the bigot-in-chief to Britain.

A day of protests is set to take place across Britain on Monday of next week as MPs debate Trump's planned state visit.

The date was already marked for campaigning by the One Day Without Us initiative to highlight the importance of migrant workers in the face of racist scapegoating.

Ake Achi, the Birmingham-based founder of the initiative, told Socialist Worker, "The idea is to show the contribution we make. But not only that—it's to show that there's a network of people who will support migrant workers' rights and fight together against what the government is doing."

The government this week formally rejected a petition signed by nearly 2 million people against Trump's visit. MPs will still debate the petition next Monday at 4.30pm.

Holding

A protest has been called by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR), the People's Assembly and others outside parliament from 3pm—and another event is planned from 6pm.

Many other cities are also holding protests.

MPs are not scheduled to have a vote on Monday. Campaigners are demanding an indicative vote and pushing for a full parliamentary debate.

Some students are organising actions on their campuses. Mataio Dean from UCL university in central London told Socialist Worker, "We want to have a protest or a walkout."

"We're trying to get the UCU lecturers' union to back it. That'll be jointly with something organised by students from nearby Soas."

He added, "We've had a few



PROTESTING IN Edinburgh last Saturday

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

Student Stand Up To Racism meetings. People from both the Islamic and the black and ethnic minority societies have come. We've been leafleting for SUTR and getting a really good response."

In Birmingham students plan a day of banner making ahead of a protest and rally in Birmingham city centre. Students will also join a rally in Manchester city centre.

Meanwhile students at Queen

Mary University in east London will rally on campus.

Up to 4,000 marched against Trump in Edinburgh last Saturday. Alan Bell told Socialist Worker, "Things are clearly changing."

"The anger that people have towards the racism in society is being focused on the disgusting misogynist Trump."

"New people are becoming politicised since Trump's election. They

want to be part of something big and believe that they can change society."

To take this movement forward, groups that organised a 40,000-strong march against Trump in London this month have now launched a broad-based Stand Up To Trump Committee backed by several unions and others.

It will hold a summit in London this Saturday.

Opposition is already bearing fruit—and the Tories' plans for the state visit are already unravelling.

Speaker

Speaker of the House of Commons Jon Bercow has said he doesn't think Trump should be allowed to address parliament.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that Trump's aides suggested an indoor rally at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham instead of a visit to London.

This would be a humiliating retreat. The Telegraph claims it's founded on the hope that Trump would be more welcome in the West Midlands.

Ake said, "I don't think they sat down before making that decision—if they think Trump will be welcome in Birmingham they don't have a clue."

Activists have promised big protests. Birmingham council quickly pointed out that it hadn't been consulted. One Labour MP declared Trump "not welcome here" and started a petition against the visit.

Weyman Bennett from SUTR said, "Protesters have been on the streets in their thousands against Trump over recent weeks in London, Birmingham and many other cities."

"Trump and May have to realise that wherever they choose to come, they will be met by mass protests."

What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

United to keep bigotry out

THE STAND up to Trump organising meeting last Friday brought together a broad range of groups.

They included Stand Up To Racism, the People's Assembly, Labour left group Momentum, Stop the War, Abortion Rights, Muslim Engagement and Development, the Muslim Association of Britain and Friends of Al-Aqsa.

The Unite, CWU, NUT, UCU unions and the NUS student union also took part.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn's office, the TUC union federation and the organisers of

last month's Women's March attended as observers.

They plan a nationwide organising summit in London this Saturday.

Speakers are set to include Faduma Hassan, from Momentum, NUT teachers' union general secretary Kevin Courtney, and Phyllis Opoku-gyimah from Black Pride.

Writer and broadcaster Tariq Ali, comedian Shappi Korsandi, and musician Tom Robinson will also speak.

For more details and to register go to bit.ly/2kp4HBE

ANTI-RACISM

All out for demos on 18 March

HUNDREDS OF people attended four local Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) rallies last week. Anti-racists are building for demonstrations called by SUTR in London, Glasgow and Cardiff on 18 March.

Some 200 turned out in Bristol last Thursday to hear speakers, including Judah Abundi who was tasered by police last month.

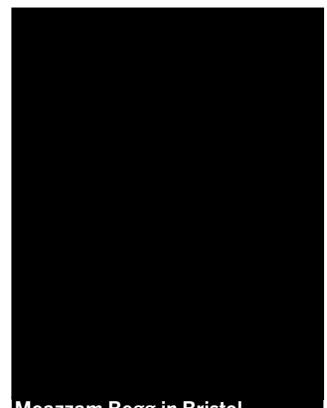
"Racism is a problem, a stink, a disease," he said. "Tonight was a good meeting. It was an investment in hopes to see a better future."

Former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg told Socialist Worker, "I'm proud to be a speaker alongside this panel tonight.

"I remember when there was only a few people and now it's a packed house.

"People are awakening to the reality."

In Newham, east London,



Moazzam Begg in Bristol

the entrance to Stratford Picturehouse was abuzz last Thursday.

Siema Iqbal from Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend) said Muslims have "had enough" of Islamophobia and "are determined to fight".

Professor Leslie Brent, who fled the Nazis as a child, condemned prime minister Theresa May's locking out of child refugees as "a total disgrace and completely indefensible" (see page 5).

At a diverse and angry meeting of 120 people in Sheffield last Tuesday, many people spoke of their experience of facing racism with a determination to stop its growth.

Shadow justice minister Yasmin Qureshi addressed the launch rally of Bolton SUTR last Saturday, warning that the conditions for the Holocaust could be recreated.

Trevor Goodfield, Jim Shay, Miriam Scharf & Adam Rose

STAND UP TO TRUMP

NATIONAL ORGANISING SUMMIT

SATURDAY
18 FEBRUARY

10am-5pm
Friends Meeting House,
London NW1 2BJ

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

MONDAY
20 FEBRUARY

●3pm, lobby MPs as they debate Trump's visit
●6pm, join the protest in Parliament Square



Trump's deportation raids spark resistance

Raids on immigrants by border guards provoked big protests across the US, writes **Alistair Farrow**

RESISTANCE TO US president Donald Trump's racist assault on ordinary people is still growing.

On Monday well over 10,000 people marched through Milwaukee in the state of Wisconsin. It was part of a Day Without Latinos, Refugees and Immigrants protest.

Over 150 businesses closed on the day, and hundreds—perhaps thousands—of workers stopped work to join the demonstration.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency launched raids across at least 11 US states and arrested more than 700 "illegal" immigrants last weekend.

The raids come after Trump's executive order on immigration last month broadened the focus for targeting immigrants for deportation. It now includes anyone who "in the judgment of an immigration officer" poses a "risk to public safety or national security".

This means up to 11 million undocumented migrants could be threatened with deportation.

Deborah Axt of pro-migrant campaign Make the Road addressed a rally last Friday night in New York City. She said, "This definition is broad enough to cover nearly anyone who came to this country to survive, to put food in their children's mouths, or to flee violence and persecution."

Escalation

Last weekend's raids were a brutal escalation by Trump. But they follow years of increasing deportations under former president Barack Obama's administration.

The raids were met with fierce resistance across the US.

An annual civil rights march in Raleigh, North Carolina, saw a huge march of over 80,000 people furious with Trump's attacks. Hundreds demonstrated in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Alabama and dozens of other towns and cities.

Activist Eric Fretz told Socialist Worker that in New York "multiple demonstrations took place last Saturday, often in migrant neighbourhoods".

Protesting in New York

He said, "The protest from Washington Square Park left without a permit and about 500 people marched through the small streets of the West Village, avoiding police trying to block them in."

Police violently tried to stop people demonstrating all across the country.

Strike

A national strike, planned for Friday 17 February, has migrant solidarity groups at its centre. Todd Wolfson, one of the organisers of the strike, told Socialist Worker that one group "is organising 'A Day without an Immigrant' for May Day."

The possibility of linking the movement for sanctuary campuses—colleges that adopt policies to protect students who are undocumented immigrants—with organised labour and migrant rights groups is growing.

Trump is attacking working class people on a number of fronts.

"All my teachers are very concerned," said Jessica Troy, a community college student in Colorado.

"Not just about education secretary Betsy DeVos, but about everything in the Trump administration."

Students are getting involved in the migrant workers' solidarity movements.

Michael Drexler, a professor at Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, told Socialist Worker, "The Bucknell student protest group (BAD, or Bucknell Alternative Delegation) is organising for the 17 February strike."

Thanks to **Iannis Delatolas**

RALEIGH'S CIVIL rights march backed affordable care and opposed Donald Trump's immigration policies

New attacks being 'rapidly' prepared

THE TRUMP administration announced last weekend that it will push ahead with its "Muslim ban" despite a court ruling against it.

Stephen Miller, a senior adviser to Trump, reaffirmed the administration's commitment to the ban. "A district judge in Seattle cannot force the president of the United States to change their laws and our constitution because of their own personal views," he said last Sunday.

But people affected are now arriving in the US after the ban was lifted. The solidarity demonstrations and strikes forced Democratic politicians and judges into taking action.

Socialist Worker spoke to Jessica Troy, who organised solidarity for a classmate kept out of the country by the ban.

She said, "There was a student in my programme at our school that was kept out of the country by the travel ban, and I was letting all my teachers and classmates know about it.

"I think she got back Sunday, thankfully."

The movement will need to prepare to resist the next attack, which is coming soon.

"We'll be doing something very rapidly having to do with additional security for our country," said Trump on Sunday. "You'll be seeing that sometime next week."



Outside the White House last Saturday

Bigots get outnumbered

PROTESTS took place outside Planned Parenthood clinics in the US last Saturday as anti-abortion bigots demanded the federal government withdraw the group's funding.

They were met by pro-choice activists, despite Planned Parenthood (PP) releasing a statement telling its supporters to stay at home.

Thousands of

people came out in support of the organisation, which carried out over 300,000 abortions in 2014 alone.

If federal funds are removed some 400,000 women will be left without access to PP services—including counselling, cancer screening and birth control.

Trump has given confidence to the anti-

abortion movement.

In the primary stages of the election process he said that women who got abortions should be punished.

But the movement against him has already shown it can force him back—that needs to happen with his attacks on women as well.

More on the fight for abortion rights on page 17

FIGURE IT OUT

11 million undocumented migrants in the US are threatened by Trump's executive order on immigration

11 states saw raids by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials last weekend

2 million migrants were deported under the previous Obama administrations—Trump inherits that infrastructure

Vile Tories close down route to safety for child refugees

THE SAME Tory government that's opening the door to bigot-in-chief Donald Trump slammed it in the face of lone child refugees last week.

Home secretary Amber Rudd announced last Wednesday that Britain would stop taking in children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, known as the Dubs amendment.

Labour peer Alf Dubs, whose campaigning saw the amendment adopted, told Socialist Worker, "It's a shameful closing down of the scheme to bring child refugees in. It's quite wrong and it leaves vulnerable children in danger."

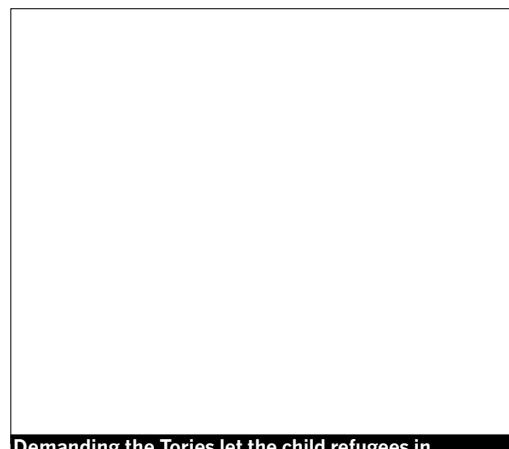
Excuse

Tens of thousands of children are among the refugees seeking safety in Europe—100,000 by some estimates. The British state finds any excuse not to take them in.

Some have been able to come as relatives of people already in Britain, others have risked their lives travelling in the back of lorries.

The amendment committed the government to identify and take in other unaccompanied children.

It was expected to bring in 3,000. Rudd said that 200 have



Demanding the Tories let the child refugees in

been brought in so far and the scheme will be closed after just 150 more.

Dubs, who came to Britain as a child fleeing the Nazis in the 1930s, called it "a shabby breach of what they said at the time."

Rudd claimed the closure was necessary to stop human traffickers.

But it's locking children out that makes them vulnerable to the most predatory and exploitative elements.

The decision was slammed in parliament. Labour MP and home affairs select committee chair Yvette Cooper accused the government of "turning its back" on children.

MPs will debate a motion on unaccompanied children in Greece and Italy next Thursday.

It will raise the issue of the Dubs

amendment. A legal challenge will be heard in May.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) has launched an online petition against the closure and over 100 people were outside Downing Street at short notice last Friday.

Welcoming refugees will also be one of the demands of the SUTR national demonstrations on Saturday 18 March.

Popular outrage forced David Cameron's government to accept the Dubs amendment. It will take even more to stop Theresa May's government overturning it.

Dubs said, "What people should do is get onto their MPs, contact their local councillors, and join demonstrations."

Sign the Stand Up To Racism petition at bit.ly/2lv1jai

Camp conditions 'appalling'

by CAROL DERBYSHIRE

IN THE wake of the British government revoking the Dubs agreement many children will continue to suffer in horrendous conditions imposed by this inhuman act.

The La Liniere refugee camp in Dunkirk, northern France, has tripled in size to around 1,500 refugees, following the closure of "the jungle" Calais refugee camp.

On entering La Liniere through "security" the sheer number of children and babies in the camp is

instantly obvious. These children are exposed to freezing temperatures in damp overcrowded huts.

Even bare essentials are proving to be life threatening—the only heating in the huts are paraffin lamps.

Poisoning

Children and adults are being hospitalised by carbon monoxide poisoning.

Volunteers in the camp are fighting an uphill battle to improve the appalling conditions.

Tensions are high between refugees and the security, as they are removing huts

when left empty for a short space of time.

This only increases the overcrowding, and forces many to seek refuge in the smaller camps on the borders of Calais and Dunkirk.

These camps pose even more risk to children as it is harder for volunteers on the ground to supply essential aid.

The impact of dismantling "the jungle" hasn't cut the number of refugees in crisis, it has increased their vulnerability through dispersal.

Carol went to northern France with Social Work Action Network last weekend

Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

UNITED STRUGGLE CAN DEFEND FREE MOVEMENT

DEFENDING freedom of movement and migrant workers' rights is a key dividing line in British politics.

Poll after poll shows that a majority of people want the government to guarantee the rights of European Union (EU) migrants already in Britain.

But desperate to pressure the EU into a good deal for bosses, Theresa May is using migrants as a bargaining chip.

Socialist Worker has always supported open borders because immigration controls—based on locking up groups of people—are inherently racist.

Freedom of movement is not the same as open borders. It is the present set up that allows EU citizens to travel and reside across Europe.

When it comes to keeping freedom of movement almost every politician is falling in behind the Tories.

Labour's shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry casually remarked that Labour would not "die in a ditch" to defend it.

They largely accept that people who voted to leave the EU are

racist and want less immigration.

A YouGov poll this week showed Labour trailing behind the Tories and Ukip among manual workers and unemployed people.

Many Labour politicians will argue this shows the party has to move to the right and ape Ukip's scapegoating.

Racism was whipped up by both sides during the EU referendum. But the Leave vote was, as Labour's Dianne Abbot argued, a "cry of rage against the Westminster elite".

We have to fight to pull that anger at the establishment in a left wing and anti-racist direction.

To defend freedom of movement, we need unity no

matter how people voted. It's the Tories and the bosses, not migrants, who slash wages, shut hospitals and schools and sack workers. To stop that assault on working class people we need to be united and resist all their attempts to divide us.

A danger is that defending migrants becomes tied to a defence of the EU's neoliberal single market.

We have to argue for a socialist and anti-racist alternative—no to the single market, yes to free movement.

The large protests against Donald Trump and Theresa May—and the mobilisations next week—show the potential to build a mass movement against racism and in defence of migrants.

The thousands of first-time protesters weren't just angry at Trump, but also at May for her bigotry.

The demonstrations on 18 March, called by Stand Up To Racism and backed by the TUC, will be a key part of building on that mood.

Only by building unity can we have a movement that's big enough and strong enough to give the Tories and their ilk a kicking.



Thousands of protesters were angry at Theresa May—not just Donald Trump

SMASH THIS DAM SYSTEM

THE OROVILLE dam in California is a grotesque metaphor for US capitalism. The dam—the largest in the US—is ready to burst.

Over 180,000 people have been evacuated. Dams in the US are aging—and few are properly maintained. Between 2003 and 2017 there were 173 dam failures in the US.

Like the dam, US capitalism and the infrastructure which supports it is bloated and fit to burst.

The US ruling class has stuck a

plaster over a gaping wound and hoped for the best.

The country stumbles zombie-like toward the next disaster.

The Oroville dam could be it. So could another water scandal that was exposed last year.

For nearly two years people in Flint, Michigan, drank and bathed in water contaminated by lead and classified as toxic waste.

Yet at least 33 cities have used the same water tests which prevented the scale of the crisis being known. The number of

similar serious lead contamination incidents could be in the thousands. And what does US president Donald Trump do? Build a wall against migrants.

The people at the top of society do not care about ordinary people.

And as with the economic crisis that exploded nearly ten years ago, those at the top won't do anything until it is too late.

We need an alternative to their system of greed, death and poverty.

STAND UP TO RACISM

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS

- Stand up to Trump
- Migrants and refugees welcome
- Stand up to racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism

SATURDAY 18 MARCH
London, Glasgow, Cardiff



standuptoracism.org.uk

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Tories should be in trouble over Brexit

ON THE face of it, the Tories should be more divided than Labour by the vote to leave the European Union—185 Tory MPs voted Remain on 23 June last year, and 135 for Leave. But 58 percent of Tory voters backed Leave while ten Labour MPs and 37 percent of Labour voters opted for Leave.

So why has the government bill authorising Theresa May to trigger the Article 50 countdown to leaving the EU caused so much more trouble for Labour?

In part this is because May emerged as the only credible pro-Remain candidate to replace David Cameron.

Tory MPs hoping to minimise the break with the EU therefore are stuck with her for fear of ending up with Boris Johnson instead. This is despite the fact that May is a Little Englander whose priorities of abandoning free movement of labour and escaping the EU's legal jurisdiction make a hard Brexit more likely.

So Labour was unable to exploit the government's small majority in the House of Commons last week to amend the Article 50 bill by, for example, guaranteeing EU citizens currently resident here the right to stay in Britain.

May managed to keep pro-Remain Tories in line with a combination of vague promises and a brutal whipping operation. "Organisation, hope and hate," a Tory official told the Financial Times newspaper. "We used them all."

Jeremy Corbyn by contrast couldn't manage to get even all the Labour whips to respect his instruction to vote to trigger Article 50 on the bill's third reading. He was right to take this line, both to respect the result of the referendum and to avoid driving pro-Leave Labour voters into the arms of the Tories and Ukip.

But this sensible position has been undermined by the constant disloyalty of the right wing majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). They used the referendum result to try to remove Corbyn. Despite the humiliating failure of this coup, they have campaigned for Labour to drop its support for free movement of labour and to vote against the Article 50 bill.

Antics

Corbyn's position has been further undermined by the antics of some figures on the Labour left, notably Clive Lewis. Despite a left-wing background, Lewis as shadow defence secretary refused to back Corbyn's opposition to renewing the Trident nuclear missile system. After being moved to shadow business secretary, he then attacked freedom of movement.

Finally, after more well-publicised agonising, Lewis resigned from the shadow cabinet and voted against the Article 50 bill. He subsequently dismissed reports that he was canvassing support for a leadership bid. But others on the Labour left have been talking him up as a future party leader for months.

Whatever the intentions of Lewis and his backers, they are playing into the hands of the Labour right. The hapless Owen Smith failed in his challenge to Corbyn last summer because he was incapable of convincing the massive new membership of the Labour Party that he was genuinely to the left of the Blairites in the PLP. Lewis would stand a much better chance at this.

Many pro-Remain left wingers have attacked Corbyn for backing the Article 50 bill. But it is an illusion to imagine the referendum result can be reversed. Opinion polls stubbornly show that the British electorate remains divided on the issue, with a narrow majority supporting Brexit.

The split is not just among voters in general, but in the working class as a whole. Even the most committed left wing Remainer can't ignore the fact that it was the poorest people in British society who voted Leave.

Anyone who's serious about building a militant and principled left has to recognise and work to overcome this division.

Corbyn has failed in his efforts to present policies offering an alternative to the hard Brexit which the Tories are driving towards. This is mainly the fault of the Labour right and their soft left allies like Lewis.

But Corbyn can only save his leadership if he breaks out of Westminster to lead the emerging mass movement against the racist future offered by May and her new friend in the White House.

KEEP YOUR enemies close—Watson wants rid of Corbyn, but says, "this is not the time"

Lewis backs off, but Labour right out for Corbyn's blood

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR MP Clive Lewis appears to have backed down from challenging left wing party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

But the Labour right are still desperate for an opportunity to get rid of Corbyn—and will keep pressuring him to drop his left wing positions.

In an interview last Saturday Lewis said speculation that he was preparing to challenge Corbyn was "total bollocks".

He has been touted as a possible challenger to Corbyn from the "soft" left of the party, and is backed by some former Corbyn supporters.

It came after Lewis resigned as Labour's shadow business secretary on Wednesday of last week.

Leaving

He quit the role to defy Corbyn and vote against a bill in parliament to begin the process of leaving the European Union (see left).

The Telegraph newspaper reported last Friday that Lewis had been "sounding out" support among Labour MPs for a potential challenge to Corbyn.

It also said that Guardian newspaper columnist and former Corbyn supporter Owen Jones had spoken to MPs to test support for Lewis.

Lewis then said rumours of a potential challenge were "fantasy politics" and that

"nothing could be further from my mind".

And Labour deputy leader Tom Watson, who is strongly linked with the attempt to remove Corbyn last summer said, "This is not the time for a leadership election."

Yet the Labour right—and some on the soft left—are still desperate to get rid of Corbyn.

The right are still furious after Labour members and supporters overwhelmingly elected Corbyn in two successive leadership elections.

And some on the soft left accept the idea that Corbyn's

left wing politics make Labour unelectable, and want a figure like Lewis to appeal to the right.

They wanted to use Corbyn's decision to vote for the bill to leave the EU to whip up anger against him among Labour members.

Many Corbyn supporters want to stay in the EU because they associate it with protecting migrants and workers' rights.

The right and soft left hoped Corbyn supporters would abandon him over the issue in favour of Lewis.

Stop Ukip in Stoke election

LABOUR FACES defending two seats in parliamentary by-elections that are set to take place in Copeland in Cumbria and Stoke on Thursday of next week.

Many fear that Labour could lose in Cumbria, where its vote dropped under right wing MP Jamie Reed.

And in Stoke Central the racist Ukip party, which came second there at the last general election, wants to whip up racism to take the seat from Labour.

Socialist Worker is calling for a vote for Labour in

both elections. They will be seen as referendums on Jeremy Corbyn's Labour—and Corbyn could be forced to resign as leader if Labour does badly.

The racist right will feel ecstatic if Ukip leader Paul Nuttall wins in Stoke.

Labour has rightly attacked Nuttall for his previous statements supporting privatisation of the NHS.

But Labour's official campaign has not challenged Ukip over its racism.

Labour will be most effective if it both attacks the cuts and also confronts Ukip's divisive racism.



Yet few Corbyn supporters will trust the Labour right—and the revolt against him among Labour members didn't happen. Lewis could struggle to find support among Labour MPs.

Although the right want to get rid of Corbyn, many want a more right wing candidate.

The right still hope they can force Corbyn to resign—particularly if Labour does badly in two by-elections next week (see box).

Defending

In the meantime they will keep pressuring Corbyn to make concessions to them—particularly over defending migrants and free movement.

In a sign of the direction the right want to take Labour in, Watson said Labour could adopt a policy of regional immigration controls inside Britain.

These would mean migrants would only be allowed to live in certain parts of the country.

The right have already forced too many concessions out of Corbyn. He has dropped opposition to nuclear power, and has already said that Labour is "not wedded" to defending free movement.

The left has to defend Corbyn against the right's attacks—not abandon him for a more right wing alternative.

But Corbyn also has to stand firm against right wing attempts to wring further concessions from him.

A show of confidence at cinema walkouts

Picturehouse cinema workers told **Alistair Farrow** how they're organising to win better pay

HUNDREDS OF workers took part in the biggest cinema strike in British history last Saturday.

Members of the Bectu section of the Prospect union struck from 2pm at four branches of the Picturehouse cinema chain in London.

It was the latest walkout in a gruelling fight for better pay that has lasted two years. Their demands include the London Living Wage of £9.75 an hour and maternity, paternity and sick pay.

At the central London site, near Piccadilly Circus, first-time strikers told Socialist Worker how they've built the union.

Andrea Cencioni, the union branch secretary, said, "Bectu is not recognised at our cinema, but we have more members than in the Forum."

Workers say the Forum is a bosses' union set up by Picturehouse to undermine Bectu and the demand for the London Living Wage.

Andrea said, "There's 110 people working here, but management recruited 40 people on zero hours contracts to undermine the strike.

"They are all on a three-month probationary period, so they can't yet join the union."

"Management had all of them working today, but gave everyone else the day off."

Threatened

Bosses at Picturehouse have refused to negotiate with workers and have threatened them with legal action to stop the strikes. Their lawyers sent letters to the union insisting on six pickets per site.

But the workers have remained resolute despite bosses' refusal to budge.

Holly, a Bectu rep at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, south London, said, "Picturehouse prefer to threaten us with legal action rather than negotiate.

"There are constant scare tactics and attempts to distract us to stop us organising."

Picturehouse's parent company Cineworld made over £83 million

BACK STORY

Workers at Picturehouse cinemas in London want the London Living Wage (LLW)

- The LLW currently stands at £9.75 an hour
- A fight for the LLW in 2013 saw Picturehouse workers in Brixton, south London, win a pay increase
- But the two-year deal did not match the LLW
- Now they're back fighting for more
- And other Picturehouse workers have joined them

last year—the idea they can't afford to pay the living wage is laughable.

As Holly said, "We know they're not short of money though. Cineworld just bought the Empire cinema in Leicester Square."

Workers have fought to build the union in conditions where it is hard to organise.

Holly said, "When we started at the Ritzy cinema two years ago, we said we need more sites to come out with us. Now we have—and it's inspirational."

This has given them confidence to fight on. "Those sites are growing quickly and there's a strength and confidence that we give each other," Holly said.

Workers are determined to keep up their fight—but they need solidarity to beat back the bosses.

Gloria, who was picketing the central London site, said, "This is the first time we've been out on strike, but I doubt it will be the last.

"London mayor Sadiq Khan wrote to the CEOs of Cineworld recently supporting our campaign—but we need action not words."

Workers have called a demonstration for 25 February. This should be a focal point for trade unionists and campaigners to build solidarity with their fight.

For protest details go to **Demo for A Living Wage. Support the Picturehouse Strike!** on Facebook



STRIKERS OUTSIDE the Picturehouse cinema in Crouch End, north London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

UNITE UNION

Left wing challenger on course to be on ballot paper in leadership election

UNITE UNION general secretary Len McCluskey looks set to face an election contested from the left as well as the right.

Rank and file candidate and Fujitsu worker Ian Allinson has gathered enough nominations to stand.

McCluskey called the election at short notice on a short timetable last December. This made it difficult for candidates outside the union machine to get on the ballot paper.

Each needs nominations from 50 Unite branches or workplaces by Friday of this week.

As of Sunday Allinson had got 53. Though he warned supporters that they would need to keep campaigning up to the wire as some nominations could be ruled out.

Allinson has called

for the union to take the lead in fighting Tory austerity and bosses' attacks, and a firmer stand against anti-migrant racism.

This contrasts with McCluskey's reliance on partnership with bosses—for example by lining up with them to lobby for airport expansion and new nuclear plants.

McCluskey has also pressured Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn not to oppose renewing Trident nuclear weapons, or defend the freedom of movement of European Union migrants.

Unite is a powerful force within Labour—the party's biggest funder and a major source of its activist membership.

This relationship has been very limited in challenging

right wing Labour leaders to deliver for workers. But it has held back the left wing leadership from pursuing some progressive policies.

Workers in Unite report that the lacklustre performance of right wing challenger Gerard Coyne has made members more open to nominating Allinson.

Despite initially receiving enthusiastic publicity in the media, Coyne has failed to secure nominations in regions and industries expected to be his heartland.

Though still likely to be on the ballot paper, he appears not to have a serious support base inside the union.

This weakens the arguments of McCluskey's left wing supporters who claim that backing Allinson risks letting in Coyne.

Allinson, currently in dispute against his cost-cutting bosses, pledges to keep claiming a workers' wage if elected—rather than McCluskey's six-figure salary.

His challenge is a chance to drag Unite closer to being what McCluskey claims it is—a "fightback union".



Ian Allinson

Police rape spurs revolt in France

FURIOUS PROTESTS have swept France over the apparent rape with a truncheon of a young black man by police officers.

The victim, Theo, is hospitalised with severe and possibly permanent injuries.

Around 5,000 people protested in Bobigny, Paris, last Saturday, with smaller protests in other cities.

There has been rioting, with cars, bins and bus stops burned and windows smashed.

It follows a number of protests in the Paris suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois where the assault took place.

Young people in the area told journalists it was a notorious blind spot for CCTV cameras and the police abuse that fact.

Politicians rushed to appeal for "calm", and president Francois Hollande turned up at Theo's hospital bed to extort such a call from the victim himself.

But the cops' arrogance has undermined attempts to manage the outrage.

Their watchdog ruled that the

Protesters in Aulnay demand justice

forcible insertion of a truncheon was not rape but an "accident". A leader of the police union said that the racist insult used by Theo's abusers was "just about appropriate".

Police clamped down viciously in Aulnay with more stop and searches, arrests, and even the firing of live ammunition.

Parliament has passed a new law granting more powers to the police—a victory for cops' own protest marches.

These were led by a supporter of the fascist Front National—expected to get the votes of around half of police officers in the upcoming presidential election.

The death in custody of Adama Traore last year and the violent repression of strikes and protests highlighted the viciousness of the police.

The response to Theo's rape has galvanised that anger, and could feed into an anti-racist March for Dignity on Sunday 19 March.

With the police and their fascist ally on the front foot, the need for resistance is urgent.

Protests in Romania call for the government to go

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

CHANTS OF, "Thieves resign!" echoed through the Romanian capital Bucharest last Sunday as up to 50,000 people took to the streets.

A further 20,000 people joined protests in other towns and cities demanding the fall of the government.

This wave of mass protests, now in its second week, has forced the ruling social democratic party into retreat.

Prime minister Sorin Grindeanu had passed a decree watering down punishment for corruption. Those found guilty of abuse of power would have only faced jail if their corruption case involved more than £38,000.

An immediate beneficiary would have been Liviu Dragnea, leader of the social democrats, who is charged with corruption of £24,000.

Faced with a nationwide revolt, the government repealed the decree but it is now trying to push a bill through parliament.

While the number of protesters dropped, many remained on the streets and their demands have radicalised.

In the hope of staving off the crisis, Grindeanu pushed the bill's architect—justice minister Florin Iordache—to resign last Thursday.

But his attempts have been in vain as the social democrats barely survived a vote of confidence in parliament tabled by the right wing opposition parties.

The National Liberal Party and the Save Romania Union have jumped on the protesters' demands, but they offer no alternative.

They are supported by the European Union (EU) and argue that the social democrats are "turning back the clock" to before the 1989 popular revolution.

Dictator

The social democrats trace their origins to the National Salvation Front.

This was a wing of the old Stalinist regime that broke with dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and put itself at the head of the popular revolution in 1989.

But right across Eastern Europe the hope of 1989 was betrayed, as many from the old Stalinist ruling class kept their power.

Managers of state-owned firms became the bosses of privatised firms and Stalinist politicians became "democratic" politicians of all stripes.

But the new ruling class has divided—and it's this competition and jockeying for position that

TENS OF thousands protested in Romania against corruption and the government

ultimately causes the corruption.

The right has seized on the protests to revive itself after social democrats were swept into office last December on a wave of anger against austerity.

The right wing president Klaus Iohannis is a staunch supporter of the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA).

Spooks

This is a sprawling institution, backed by the EU, which works closely with the Romanian spooks.

This section of part of the ruling class hopes to tap into people's anger and mobilise a section of society behind it to do over their opponents.

When movements against corruption spring up in eastern Europe, many look to the EU and free market as an alternative.

Many protesters have voiced support for the DNA and the EU.

These divisions at the top can spur more resistance—but they have also shaped the anger on the ground.

To avoid a realignment at the top of society, protesters will have to articulate independent demands that go beyond the different wings of the ruling class.

L On other pages...
What do we mean by class? >>
Pages 14&15

Turkey steps up attacks on workers in education

TURKISH PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to give his regime a democratic gloss.

A referendum that parliament has called for 16 April could deliver him still greater powers.

The proposed reform would give the president power to issue decrees, declare emergency rule, and appoint or dismiss ministers and officials.

It could also allow Erdogan to stay in power until 2029.

The main opposition parties—the right wing social democratic CHP and the pro-Kurdish HDP—both oppose the changes.

But over 80 percent of the media is under the influence of the government, and many alternative voices have been silenced since a coup attempt last July.

Erdogan used the coup to crack down on opponents, even if they had come out against the coup.

Meanwhile the state continues to intensify its attacks. A newly declared

President Erdogan

decree saw 4,461 public workers dismissed last week.

No explanation has been given as to the charges made against them and they are being deprived of the right to defend themselves.

The decree resulted in the suspension of 2,585 teachers and 330 academics from their roles. In total 4,811 higher education academics have been discharged by statutory decree and the number of school teachers suspended has risen to over 50,000.

For updates and campaigning details go to SPOT (Solidarity with the People of Turkey) on Facebook

Well done to Shafiq Mohammed

AT AYR Sheriff Court last week Sheriff Weir gave Shafiq Mohammed an absolute discharge from charges brought against him by Scottish Defence League (SDL) supporters in November 2015.

Shafiq had been arrested in Monkton, South Ayrshire, and charged with racially aggravated breach of the peace and resisting arrest.

SDL supporters had complained to police that Shafiq had called them "white bastards".

The Sheriff chose to believe that he had done what he was accused of.

But Shafiq came before the court with no previous convictions, a clean record since the incident and exemplary personal testimonials.

The absolute discharge means Shafiq has no conviction, no criminal record and he doesn't have to disclose this matter to a future potential employer.

On Shafiq's behalf, Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees (GCWR) would like to thank his solicitor and all those who have supported him.

The law regarding racial aggravation must be reassessed.

It wrongly assumes equivalence between white people and black and ethnic minority people.

Shafiq has been sorely distressed.

But he is more determined than ever to fight the dark shadows of racism lurking in our society.

Jock Morris
 Chair, GCWR

Shirebrook solidarity over abuse of player

FULL PRAISE must go to the players of Shirebrook football club.

They showed solidarity with a player who was racially abused during a game on 17 December last year.

Shirebrook's Bruno Holden was racially abused well within earshot of the match referee, who took no action against the abusing player.

The abused player started complaining—rightly so—about the incident to the referee, who



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Building Stand Up To Racism has created a buzz at school

WE'VE HAD a great experience in building Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) in the school where I teach.

People are genuinely panicked about the rise in racism that we are seeing in Britain.

But getting organised has also given people a confidence boost—and it's created really good debates and discussions in school.

It was important to get people to the big national SUTR conference last October.

Getting a few people there made it much easier to build SUTR in the workplace. The conference became a talking point, and people started saying we should set up a group at school.

We called a planning meeting and worked out what we wanted to do.

We leafleted our local Tube station, and mosques.

We got a good response and have made links with the local Imam, and the Mend and Friends of Al Aqsa groups.

We did lunchtime leafleting to publicise the protests around Donald Trump's inauguration, and the SUTR trade union conference last Saturday.

We built among NUT and Unison union members. And all the time we were recruiting to SUTR.

Getting the badges around was another key thing.

We sold SUTR badges to

teachers, then the kids picked up on the fact that we were all wearing them and they wanted them too.

The kids got rid of 150 in two days. Everyone now wants a badge.

It's important to say that we haven't gone from zero to 60.

Before building SUTR union members had always gone around doing collections for various things.

Last year people were involved in solidarity work for refugees in Calais. We've had a strong trade union presence in the school for years—this has paid off in building SUTR.

Name and address supplied

made matters worse by sending Bruno Holden off. This happened in the first half. In the dressing room at half time Shirebrook's players collectively refused to come back out for the second half in solidarity with their team mate. The referee had to abandon the game. Any racist abuse is a throwback to the 1970s and 1980s. It must not be tolerated.

Charlie Dowthwaite
 Barrow-in-Furness

OUT OF thin air the TUC held another "heart unions" week this week.

"Please love us, we're not so bad" seems to be the message.

Who are we asking to be loved by? Tories? Bosses? Tories and bosses hate trade unions because they stand in the way of workers being super-exploited.

On this basis I'm happy to belong to something which is hated by Tories and bosses and organises workers.

When unions fight and win, it's pretty easy to get

A convincing strategy?

appreciation from workers and union members.

But "love" from members and workers alone won't stop anti-trade union legislation. Our trade union leaders

just do not get it.

They want to be in a social partnership with bosses and the Tories.

The only partnership the bosses and the government really want is one where they can run riot.

Trade unions will always struggle to be "loved".

But they can be respected if they connect and drive the struggles happening now—and start winning real gains for workers collectively.

Helen Davies
 East London

Just a thought...

Tories blame migrants too

UKIP'S scapegoating of immigrants fuels hate crime but Ukip is not alone.

The Tories have done the same to distract from the fact that austerity is a political choice.

Bill Thompson
 on Facebook

I'll turn Green if Corbyn goes

NONE OF Jeremy Corbyn's critics have the stomach for the job (Don't play into Labour right's attempt to divide left over Brexit, Socialist Worker online, 9 February).

Whoever replaces him will be a Blairbot Version 2.3. I will join the Greens if they oust him.

Peter Angell
 on Facebook

CLIVE LEWIS is not "soft left"—he is pro nuclear arms. That makes him fully neoliberal.

Shams Pirani
 on Facebook

Don't let them simplify Brexit

WHY ARE we using the term Brexit to cover all the machinations being made on our behalf?

This is too big an issue to be left under a one-word title.

Some respect of our intelligence by politicians would not be amiss.

Margaret Moynihan
 Aberdeenshire

In defence of La La Land

ALEX CRITICISES La La Land (Letters, 1 February) for being set within the bubble of Hollywood.

Yet when films are set among poverty, such as *Slumdog Millionaire*, the message is not necessarily positive.

Ian Pierce-Hayes
 Wallasey

Please clarify health figures

YOU SAY the Tories' NHS plans have the aim of "slashing £22 billion by 2020" (Socialist Worker, 1 February).

Will £22 billion less be spent between now and 2020 in relation to present figures without cuts? Or will £22 billion less be spent in 2020 than in 2016?

Dave
 Frankfurt, Germany

N 21ST century Britain people are dying because they can't get healthcare. That's the disgraceful effect of existing restrictions on migrants using the NHS—and Theresa May wants to tighten them.

People not "ordinarily resident" in Britain can be charged thousands of pounds for some NHS services. This includes tourists, many migrant workers and their families, and destitute refugees.

Hospitals track down and bill overseas patients after treatment. This stretcher-chasing brought in £289 million last year—a tiny amount compared to the NHS budget (see right).

Now May and health secretary Jeremy Hunt want to start checking patients' passports before they can be treated.

These controls on "health tourism" are a bogus response to a bogus problem. They distract from the real threats to the NHS, undermine its existence and are wrecking lives.

Dianne Ngoza is an asylum seeker from Zambia and an activist for Manchester refugee charity Rapar. She told Socialist Worker, "I went to a funeral last month, for a young woman from South Africa. She could have been alive today, but she was afraid to go to hospital. She was pregnant and died in her home."

Her fears were well-founded.

Dianne went on, "A friend of mine was forced to give birth in hospital last year. Afterwards they presented her with a bill—but she has no income. She's still paying, in little donations of £1 or £2."

Those who can't pay have their details handed to the Border Force.

Rejected

One of Rapar's refugee clients recently applied for leave to remain in Britain as the parent of a British-born child. His application was rejected due to outstanding medical bills.

Dianne said, "Several times I've been sick and I was afraid to go to a doctor because they would ask for my passport. I had severe flu, and that was very difficult."

"I'm currently working with a man who has an eye deformity. There are old people with arthritic-type conditions that would normally be treated with physiotherapy or a hip replacement. Instead they are in pain and difficulty."



BACK STORY

A series of Immigration Acts have restricted free healthcare

- Workers and students from most countries pay a £200 surcharge
- Those classed as non-resident can be charged for most hospital care, usually after treatment
- Everyone is meant to get to see a GP, but this isn't always the case
- Emergency care is free, but the definition is contested—and a trip to A&E can lead to chargeable care
- Following pilot schemes in some hospitals, the government wants to start checking passports up front

"I even had a blackout. It was very scary, especially for my child. She was crying, 'Mama, I don't want to lose you'. It's just the two of us in the country, and if I die she has no one."

Asylum seekers can receive some care for free while their claim is processed, but anything deemed non-emergency is excluded. Those who are rejected lose even this.

Leda, a refugee support activist for We Are Wakefield in West Yorkshire, told Socialist Worker, "The whole situation is outrageous. Across the board I see people with conditions they can't get treated."

"I'm currently working with a man who has an eye deformity. There are old people with arthritic-type conditions that would normally be treated with physiotherapy or a hip replacement. Instead they are in pain and difficulty."

This cruel health apartheid harms everyone. Infectious diseases don't check passports. If left untreated in some people they can easily spread.

And the attack undermines the idea of free, universal healthcare—something the Tories have dreamed of destroying for years.

Many migrant workers can't access free NHS care due to immigration rules already. At present they are a minority.

But once the principle of charging for care has been established, and the machinery for immigration checks put



in place, it could be extended at a stroke.

wanted to come to Britain, and don't speak the language.

A&E waiting times. The Tories' racist attack on "health tourism" aims to provide a scapegoat and deflect the anger away from them.

As Dianne said, "It's all lies."

Those fighting to defend the NHS and the growing anti-racist movement must make common cause.

Stand Up To Racism is organising a

block on the national demonstration for the NHS on Saturday 4 March.

Unison is backing the national demonstrations against racism in London, Glasgow and Cardiff on Saturday 18 March.

As Haji put it, "These changes are despicable, and it's down to everyone to stand up against them."

May's refusal to guarantee the rights of European Union nationals adds to the fears that far more workers could be affected in the future. Yet migrant workers' labour keeps the NHS going.

Jama "Haji" Mohamoud is the Unison union rep for cleaners employed by contractor ISS at Homerton hospital in Hackney, east London. He told Socialist Worker, "Most people here have the right to work in Britain."

The government claims to be acting for the NHS. But most NHS workers are horrified at the idea of denying care to those who need it—as bosses at St George's hospital in south London found.

"But they don't know what will happen to them down the line. If the government does this today, what will it do tomorrow?"

They proposed checking women's passports before giving maternity care last year. And they said one of the problems with the plan was workers' reluctance.

The Royal College of Nurses, Royal College of Midwives, British Medical Association and Unison have slammed moves to turn their members into border guards.

Haji said, "They never consulted us, and if they did I would greatly oppose it. It's vindictive and it's about dividing the masses. Are we going to tell people you don't have a right to your life being saved? You don't have a right to give birth?"

Cuts and privatisation have plunged the NHS deep into crisis, making last month the worst ever for

It's vindictive and it's about dividing the masses. It's down to everyone to stand up against these measures

Haji Mohamoud
Hospital cleaner

Hospital cleaners at Homerton in east London, many from migrant backgrounds, fighting cuts by their privatised employer ISS

THE TORIES paint a picture of people conniving to milk the system. In reality it's stacked against them claiming even what little they are entitled to.

Dianne was once turned away at a clinic. It was only when she went back the next day, armed with information about her rights, that she was admitted as a patient.

Not everyone can do this. Leda said, "Whatever someone's fled and however they've got here, it leaves them traumatised. Many never

government income through taxes, and caring for them costs a "negligible fraction" of the total.

It would be "unwise as well as mean to withhold the free service from the visitor to Britain". British citizens would have to carry documents to prove their nationality. "For if the sheep are to be separated from the goats both must be classified."

Bevan remarked, "The whole agitation has a nasty taste". He accused

the Tories of seeking "to exploit the most disreputable emotions" in order "to discredit socialised medicine."



Empirical knowledge on the magnitude and effect of health tourism is lacking
Government study
Cited in the new report on health tourism

FIGURE IT OUT

Someone is really draining the NHS...

BIG PHARMA BILLIONS

of the NHS prescription budget goes straight to giant drug firms. One 2014 study found that over £2 billion went on expensive branded drugs even when cheaper "generics" were available—often at a tenth of the price

FAT CATS BILLIONS

go into giving those at the top of NHS bodies pay packages to rival corporate executives. University Hospitals of Leicester trust chief executive John Adler took the biscuit with a total pay package of £490,000 last year

TOTAL NHS BUDGET £116.4 BILLION

NON-RESIDENTS £2 BILLION

goes on care that can be charged for under migration rules. The £70 million of this attributed to deliberate health tourism is too small to see

LOAN SHARKS £2 BILLION

a year goes to service PFI loans to private banks and construction firms

UNDERSTAFFING CHAOS £3.7 BILLION

was wasted last year on drafting in expensive "locum" staff to work on wards whose regular workforce has been cut to the bone

PROFITEERS £8.7 BILLION

of last year's NHS budget went to private contractors. They cream off cash for their profits, bonuses, share dividends, advertising—and to lobby for yet more contracts

THE TORIES claim that "health tourism" costs almost £2 billion a year and that new rules will claw £500 million of that back.

None of this adds up.

The £2 billion figure comes from a government-commissioned study from 2013. It includes many people who are already being made to pay for treatment.

Some are from European countries whose governments reimburse the NHS.

The government claimed £40 million back in 2015.

As well as paying tax, workers and students from outside Europe now face a £200 "health

surcharge" on arrival. This raised £164 million last year.

People do fall ill while on holiday. But mostly they spend money. Foreign tourists spent £22 billion in Britain last year, swamping any cost associated with their care.

The government conjures images of people flocking into Britain to fleece the NHS. But its study noted that "empirical knowledge on the magnitude and effect of health tourism is lacking".

Claims are based on "anecdotal evidence" because "there are no statistically valid samples to generate estimates". It did cite one piece of research carried out in a healthcare setting—which "suggests that it is not an issue".

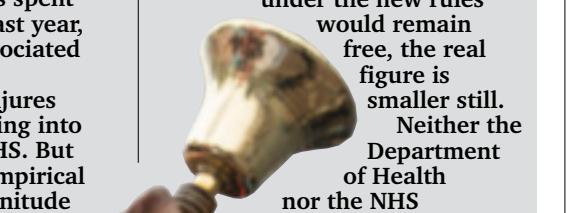
Its best guess of migrants "taking advantage" of the system was between £110 million and £280 million a year—just 0.3 percent of the NHS budget.

It estimated the cost of deliberate health tourism

at between £20 million and £100 million. And since this includes emergency care, which even under the new rules would remain free, the real figure is smaller still. Neither the Department of Health nor the NHS

Improvement Agency running passport control pilot schemes could tell Socialist Worker how much is spent enforcing the fees. But with dedicated teams in every hospital trust, this penny-pinching doesn't come cheap.

It's almost as if it was nothing to do with saving money.



PICTURE: GUY SHULLMAN

Bevan's warning still holds

They proposed checking women's passports before giving maternity care last year. And they said one of the problems with the plan was workers' reluctance.

Bevan pointed out that visitors to Britain contribute to

government income through taxes, and caring for them costs a "negligible fraction" of the total.

It would be "unwise as well as mean to withhold the free service from the visitor to Britain". British citizens would have to carry documents to prove their nationality. "For if the sheep are to be separated from the goats both must be classified."

Bevan remarked, "The whole agitation has a nasty taste". He accused

PICTURE: GUY SHULLMAN

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } RALLIES

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Thu 9 Mar, 7pm, The Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BRISTOL

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Mon 6 Mar, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, LS3 1AD

LONDON: CENTRAL

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 8 Mar, 7pm, Student Central, Malet St, WC1E 7HY

MANCHESTER

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm, Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess St, M1 6DD

SHEFFIELD

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Thu 2 Mar, 7pm, Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk St, S1 2JB

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

CARDIFF

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 8 Mar, 7.30pm, New York Diner, CF24 3BQ

OXFORD

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Thu 9 Mar, 7.30pm, Restore, Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

YORK

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 1 Mar, 7.30pm, Priory Street Community Centre, 15 Priory St, YO1 6ET

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Arguments for revolution

Wed 22 Feb, 6pm, Belmont Cinema Cafe, 49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

BARNSLEY

A history of British imperialism

Thu 23 Feb, 7pm, YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Police, racism and the state

Wed 22 Feb, 7pm, Birmingham LGBT Centre, 38/40 Holloway Circus, B1 1EQ

BOLTON

The Spanish Civil War—workers' power and the fight against fascism

Thu 23 Feb, 6.30pm, Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St, BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

Why are Labour councils attacking workers?

Thu 23 Feb, 7pm, Glyde House, Little Horton Lane, BD5 0BQ

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } RALLIES

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Thu 9 Mar, 7pm, The Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BRISTOL

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Mon 6 Mar, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, LS3 1AD

LONDON: CENTRAL

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 8 Mar, 7pm, Student Central, Malet St, WC1E 7HY

MANCHESTER

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm, Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess St, M1 6DD

SHEFFIELD

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Thu 2 Mar, 7pm, Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk St, S1 2JB

YORK

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 1 Mar, 7pm, Priory Street Community Centre, 15 Priory St, YO1 6ET

STAND UP TO RACISM RALLIES

Refugees and migrants welcome—stand up to racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism

Mobilising events for national demonstrations on Saturday 18 March in London, Glasgow and Cardiff. Go to standuptoracism.org.uk for more information about the demonstrations and how to get involved



PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

COVENTRY

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, St Peter's Centre, Charles St, Hillfields, CV1 5NP

GLASGOW

Thu 23 Feb, 7pm, Avant Garde, 33-44 King St, Merchant City, G1 5QT

LEEDS

Sat 25 Feb, 12 noon, Leeds Civic Hall, Council Chambers, Calverley St, LS1 1UR

BRIGHTON

Fascists in America? Donald Trump and the alt right

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

Brexit—what do socialists say?

Wed 22 Feb, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

BURNLEY

Why do economic depressions happen?

Wed 22 Feb, 7.30pm, Red Triangle Cafe, 160 St James's St, BB1 1NR

CAMBRIDGE

Why do people deny the Holocaust?

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, River Lane Centre, River Lane, CB5 8HP

CARDIFF

Fifty years after the Abortion Act—the fight for a woman's right to choose

Wed 22 Feb, 7.30pm, Cathays Community Centre, Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

CHESTERFIELD

Fake news—who controls the media?

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, Chesterfield Library, New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

Fighting antisemitism today

Wed 22 Feb, 7.30pm, The Odd One Out, 28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 2 March, 7.30pm, Old School Rooms, The Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Rd, E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Tue 28 Feb, 7.30pm, Kurdish Community Centre, 11 Portland Gardens, N1 4HU

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

Tue 21 Feb, 7pm, Lewisham Town Hall, Catford Rd, SE6 4RU

EDINBURGH

The revolutionary ideas of Vladimir Lenin

Wed 22 Feb, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

As a wave of protests sweep the globe—how can we stop Trump and May?

Thu 23 Feb, 6.30pm, Exeter Community Centre, 17 St Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

GLASGOW

Why we need a revolutionary paper

Thu 2 Mar, 7pm, Avant Garde, 33-44 King St, Merchant City, G1 5QT

HARLOW

From Stonewall to Trump—the fight for LGBT+ liberation

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

HUDDRSFIELD

Brexit—what do socialists say?

Wed 22 Feb, 6.30pm, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, HD1 5JP

LANCASTER

The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Thu 23 Feb, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 1 Mar, 6.45pm, 1 Merchant St, E1 3LY

MANCHESTER

Thu 2 Mar, 7pm, Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess St, M1 6DD

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 1 Mar, 7pm, Nonsuch Theatre, N SPACE, 32a Clarendon St, NG1 5JD

LIVERPOOL

From Stonewall to Trump—fighting for LGBT+ liberation

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, The Caledonia, 22 Caledonia St, L7 7DX

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

From Stonewall to Trump—fighting for LGBT+ liberation

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 1a Thorpe Close, Ladbrooke Grove, W10 5XL

LONDON: CENTRAL

How can Palestine be free?

Thu 23 Feb, 7pm, Room 130, UCL, Foster Court Building, WC1E 6BT

LONDON: EALING

The fight for trans liberation

<div data-bbox="586 791 660 820" data-label



Despite the curator, Russian artists shine in new exhibit

Jay Williams is impressed with the Royal Academy's revolutionary Russian art exhibition, but the working class is rarely seen as fully active within history

THE MOST striking thing about the Royal Academy of Arts' exhibition comes as you enter.

The front of its imposing building is covered by a massive banner depicting Boris Kustodiev's *The Bolshevik*. This personification of revolution—big, strong and male—strides above and away from the very bourgeois architecture holding the exhibition.

The irony continues as you enter the stately staircase, adorned with red flags with a disturbingly plush red carpet underfoot.

The exhibition is divided into themes, the first of which is salute to the leader.

Lenin is depicted as studious and alone. Isaak Brodsky's portrait of Lenin shows him as friendly, approachable and engaging. But it also shows a demonstration outside past a voluptuous curtain of crimson.

Intention

Whether this is the original intention is debatable. What is apparent throughout the exhibition is that the working class is rarely seen as fully active within history.

Yes, their labour is shown but, as in Alexander Deineka's *Textile Workers*, they seem almost sickly and unhappy. Again in Ekaterina Zernova's *Tomato Paste Factory*—a stunning picture with blocks of red and blue portraying product and labour—the workers are solemn at best as they struggle with hot vats in poor footwear.

What's missing are the iconic posters of the revolution. And there are too few of the tremendous photographs on display. Indeed, there is very little from 1917 and nothing from before.

It's as though this art came out



KAZIMIR MALEVICH'S Red Cavalry

of nowhere. Deineka's *Defence of Petrograd* is displayed next to *The Bolshevik*. It is soft and strong, almost monochrome but pulsing with colour. There is movement in this picture, it references Sergei Eisenstein's film *Strike*, and has women literally at the centre.

There is much to see. Ceramics, textiles with Trotsky erased from history, a constructivist's ration sheet, a room that would fit into any Ikea catalogue and some wonderful Kandinsky.

But the centre belongs to Kazimir Malevich. You could spend hours

just here. Perhaps the most affecting piece is *Red Cavalry*. With a few bold stripes Malevich evokes an expansive landscape. Similarly, in his portraiture simple geometric shapes display deep emotions.

The end of the exhibition takes you through a corridor reproducing Vladimir Krinsky's *At the Parade*, straight into the theme of Stalin's Utopia. The metaphor here is dull—revolution leads to repression.

It mimics the infantile comments of *The Guardian* newspaper's Jonathan Jones—that Bolshevik art should not be displayed because of

the revolution and all that followed.

Should Russian icon work be similarly dismissed for upholding 300 years of Romanov despotism?

Never mind Jones and go see this exhibition. Although the £16 entry fee is pricey, it's not as pricey as the gift shop's Supremacist watches (£155) or a pair of hand-made leather Malevich-inspired slippers (£160) from a luxury Russian boutique shoe brand.

All that is holy is profaned.

Revolution: Russian Art 1917–1932, Royal Academy of Arts, until 17 April. Go to royalacademy.org.uk

Poking fun at Egypt's rulers and refusing to be silent

FILM

TICKLING GIANTS

Directed by Sara Taksler
Go to ff.hrw.org/london

MOCKING THEIR rulers has always been something of a national pastime for Egyptians.

Sara Taksler's *Tickling Giants* profiles Bassem Youssef, a heart surgeon-turned-comedian whose extraordinary story mirrors the rollercoaster ride of the revolution itself.

Before 2011, Egyptians' talents for political satire had to be practised behind

closed doors, in the private spaces that the state and the boss couldn't reach. Youssef's show "El Bernameg" lampooned the powerful on primetime TV, reaching up to 30 million viewers a week. *Tickling Giants* gives us a fascinating behind-the-scenes view of Youssef's rise and fall.

It is a powerful portrait of a man whose life was changed utterly by revolution and he refused to shut up when the counter-revolution came.

Youssef's position as a satirist has contradictions.



Bassem Youssef

His popularity grew in 2012 on the back of anger at Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's man in the presidential palace.

Youssef's relentless jokes at bumbling "Super Morsi's" expense found an echo on the protests.

El Bernameg's team celebrate Morsi's downfall but wonder who will come after. Following the 2013 military coup, they begin to ask themselves if this is finally a situation which even Egyptians cannot turn into a silly political joke.

Youssef could have walked away then. Or

even put his talents to the service of the military regime. To his credit he refused.

Retribution came swiftly. With pro-regime demonstrations against his show and legal action and a potential jail sentence, Youssef fled.

But he continues to speak out, and despite everything retains his humour and optimism. "Revolution is not an event," he says, "it is a process."

Anne Alexander

Longer article online. Go to socialistworker.co.uk/reviews

THEATRE

MADE IN INDIA

Written by Satinder Chohan, directed by Katie Posner. On tour until 8 April, see tamasha.org.uk/made-in-india for more details

IN A surrogacy clinic in Gujarat, three women meet. It's Londoner Eva's last chance for motherhood. For village girl Aditi, dairy worker and single mother, surrogacy is a lifeline out of poverty.

For clinic owner and businesswoman Dr Gupta, it's all just another transaction. But with the backdrop of profound global forces, can it possibly remain that simple? India is one



From *Made In India*'s film trailer

of a handful of countries legally offering commercial surrogacy to parents internationally, although the industry is not fully regulated.

During 2016, a change to the law was drafted making surrogacy legal only to heterosexual Indian couples married for five years.

Satinder Chohan's new play about motherhood and blood ties between women and nations explores the global and personal implications of India's surrogacy industry.

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

1 **Jeremy Corbyn, Labour & the fight for socialism**
Charlie Kimber

2 **Fascism: What it is and How to Fight it**
Leon Trotsky

3 **1917: Russia's Red Year**
Tim Sanders and John Newsinger

4 **See Red Women's Workshop—Feminist Posters 1974–1990**

5 **They Can't Kill Us All**
Wesley Lowery

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

BRITAIN IS divided into "two distinct classes—those who own property and those who are getting poorer". That's according to the bosses' own Business Insider news website.

Based on a new report by the Resolution Foundation, it describes how inequality is spiralling because of stagnating wages and runaway housing costs.

The report is a damning indictment of Tory rule under both Theresa May and her predecessor David Cameron.

Growing numbers of us rightly feel that we live in a highly unequal society.

But this has also sparked big debates, particularly about what it means to be working class in 21st century Britain.

For some, such as the Labour right and the liberal Guardian newspaper, working class people are largely white and blue-collar or unemployed.

They live outside of "metropolitan" London in areas where old industries such as steel and coal have gone—and don't like immigration much.

There certainly are regional differences.

As the report notes, "Incomes in the vast majority of the country are more than 10 percent lower than in the South East.

The North East and West Midlands have the lowest levels of income, both 20 percent lower than in the South East."

But class isn't a subjective thing defined by where you come from, what sort of accent you have or what individual consumer choices you make.

As the revolutionary Karl Marx argued, class is a social relationship.

Division

For Marx the main division in a capitalist society like ours was between capitalists and workers.

The capitalist class own and control the "means of production"—the offices and computers, call centres and phones, factories and machinery.

Because the working class don't own these things, they have to sell their "labour power", their ability to work, in return for a wage. Through working for capitalists, workers are "exploited".

Exploitation isn't just about being bullied by your boss or being badly treated in the workplace.

It is about the process of how capitalists get their profits.

We're always told that the likes of tycoon Richard Branson's wealth are a reward for their risk-taking and business acumen.

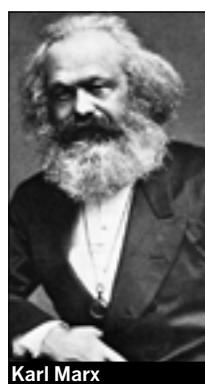
In reality, capitalists' profits depend on workers—if they



PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CLASS?

As inequality grows and politicians bicker over who's more out of touch with the working class, Tomáš Tengely-Evans looks at what class actually means—and why it's important in our fight for a better society



Karl Marx

The working class today has immense power to take on the bosses

stopped work, Branson would soon be out of pocket. But capitalists pay workers far less in wages than the amount of value their work creates.

This is why class isn't just about your income.

A worker in an office will be paid much less than their manager.

But what really makes the difference is their relationship to these means of production.

The worker has to work for

a wage and doesn't have any control over their work.

In contrast, the manager is there to enforce discipline in the workplace so capitalists can keep pumping out profits.

Of course, there have been big changes in the working class since the birth of capitalism.

This often means that managers will bully and pressure people to work harder, or longer. And they're often paid more to do it.

But it's because their positions in capitalist society—and their interests—are fundamentally different that workers

and bosses make up different classes.

Yet this same process of exploitation—and the fact that we're all exploited together—is also what gives us the power to win.

We're always told that society is just a collection of individuals competing against one another—and that certainly chimes with some of people's experience.

If you apply for a job, you're up against many other people looking for work.

At work people are increasingly faced with "performance targets" to drive up individual productivity.

While pitting workers against one another, capitalism also depends on drawing large numbers together to generate profits.

When Marx was writing during the height of the Industrial Revolution, the largest cotton mills in Lancashire employed around 137 people.

Now most workers in Britain work in workplaces of over 100—and they're not considered to be that large.

THE SIZE of the global working class is bigger than ever before. In 2013—for the first time in history—the majority of people in the global workforce were wage-labourers.

According to the International Labour Organisation there are now some 1.6 billion wage labourers—that's up by 600 million since the mid-1990s.

When Marx called on "workers of the world to unite", there were only around 20 million workers worldwide.

This means that the working class today has immense numerical and social power to take on the bosses.

By drawing large numbers of workers together, capitalism also pushes them to fight back.

While we can sometimes feel like we're in competition with one another, working together means we can identify with our common interests.

Through this process workers' ideas can also rapidly change.

As they fight back collectively, what Marx called the muck of ages—such as sexist and racist ideas—can be challenged.

Class conflict is built into the system.

But when the working class isn't fighting, it can seem that workers have lost their power to fight back.

Of course, there have been big changes in the working class since the birth of capitalism.

As Marx noted, capitalism is a dynamic system that constantly has to revolutionise the means of production.

But this doesn't mean social relations have fundamentally changed or that the working class doesn't have power.

Some argue that the decline in "traditional" manufacturing means that workers are too weak to challenge capitalism.

But manufacturing has been in decline since the First World War and it never accounted for more than 50 percent of the workforce.

MARX argued that capitalism was based on producing profits, not products.

As capitalism developed, it also developed a public sector so workers could be healthy and skilled enough to work.

Teachers and health workers are still indirectly important to keeping capitalism going and have power.

Similarly bank workers don't directly generate profits, because banks move other firms' money around and make their profits by creaming some of it off.

But without the workers, they couldn't do that.

There has been a small rise in zero hours contracts and other "irregular" forms of work.

But this is not the experience for the majority of workers and doesn't mark a fundamental transformation of capitalism.

These forms of work have always existed and these workers can and have fought back.

Capitalists constantly try to get ahead of their competitors by investing in new, more efficient technology.

This means that manufacturing output is still high, but there's fewer workers.

This also means that this group of workers has immense power to shut down their boss's profits.

Opportunities

And sometimes capitalists' attempts to restructure their industry can even open up new opportunities to shut down their system.

Many industries now have to move their products from factory to sale very quickly.

To do this they need huge concentrations of warehouses where products can arrive and be shipped out again in a matter of hours.

In the US, some of the biggest collections of these warehouses employ hundreds of thousands of people.

Similar distribution centres exist across Britain.

If these workers stopped

working they could shut down more than their own warehouse.

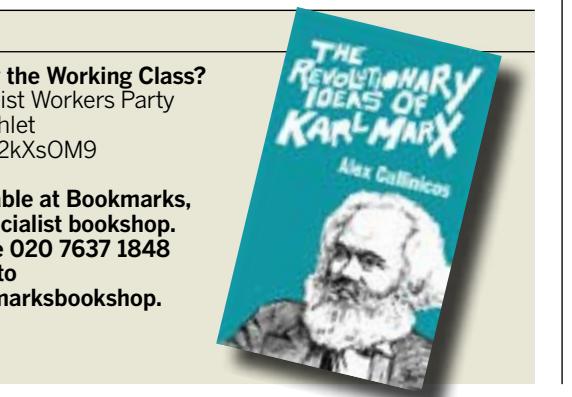
They could bring the whole "just-in-time" distribution system grinding to a halt. That's why as socialists we still look to the working class as the force in society that has the collective power to bring about real change.

It's our job to find opportunities to use that power—and point towards the struggle that can take on the whole system.

READ MORE

● **The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx**
by Alex Callinicos
£9.99

● **What is class in the 21st century?**
Socialist Worker article by Joseph Choonara
bit.ly/2g4YdrB



The 1917 Russian Revolution saw many gains for LGBT+ rights. These were inseparable from the fight for socialism



PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

1917 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Sexual liberation in the Russian Revolution

Revolutionaries fight for sexual liberation

1917 TIMELINE

4 February 1917 (1 March in modern 'New Style' calendar)

● A strike called by the Bolsheviks continues with 90,000 workers on strike from 58 different factories

● Police attempt to arrest demonstrators but protesters beat them back

became lauded internationally as the most progressive state in terms of LGBT+ rights.

Many countries today are still backward by comparison to revolutionary Russia in terms of sexual liberation.

It was not until 1967 that homosexuality was made legal in Britain.

Dr Grigory Batsik, director of the Moscow Institute for Sexual Hygiene, wrote in 1923 that "Soviet legislation... declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as no one's interest are encroached upon."

Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which

This rolling back showed what was at stake in the fight for LGBT+ rights.

But the rapid, and unprecedented, advances in the short years after the Russian Revolution show what is possible in the fight for sexual liberation.

These advances were gained through fighting for a workers' socialist revolution—the Bolsheviks saw the fight for LGBT+ rights as inseparable from the fight for socialism.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution. Read more of our coverage at tinyurl.com/sw1917

1917 ushered in a society that turned sexual relations on their head

Attacks on abortion in the US meet resistance

Activists are fighting Donald Trump's new attacks on abortion rights, writes Eleanor Claxton-Mayer

DONALD TRUMP is on the war-path against women's rights—but there is also a fightback against the attacks.

Trump and his supporters have suggested that women who have abortions should be punished. And he has reinstated former president Ronald Reagan's Global Gag rule which removes funding for charities operating abroad that give out information about abortion.

Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch, has said previously that "human life is fundamentally and inherently valuable," although he has not yet ruled on an abortion case.

The US president wants to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v Wade case in which the Supreme Court ruled that access to abortion was a constitutional right. Yet US states are still able to impose restrictions.

People in the US are more confident to take on the right after the huge Women's March protests.

Stand

A strike has been proposed by the Women's March organisers who tweeted, "The will of the people will stand." Some activists have called for this to be on 8 March, International Women's Day, and are already organising for that day.

Alexandria, a student from Hamilton College, New York told Socialist Worker, "In my home state of Texas, women's reproductive rights are under constant attack."

In Texas women are required to have a sonogram at least 24 hours before getting an abortion and the doctor has to make sure they see the image and listen to the heartbeat.

"A majority of abortion clinics in Texas have been closed in recent years making access a huge issue for Texas women," said Alexandria. "There's a wave of nationwide solidarity for reproductive rights."

Vice-president Mike Pence addressed the annual anti-abortion bigots' "March for Life" in January. He said, "This administration will work with Congress to end

FIGURE IT OUT

1.2 million women had unsafe abortions every year before 1973

5 thousand people died every year because of illegal abortions before the Roe vs Wade case

57 percent of people in the US in 2016 agreed abortion should be legal in "all or most cases"

taxpayer funding of abortion." As governor of Indiana, Pence signed off on laws criminalising abortion. These resulted in a 20-year sentence prison for Purvi Patel for a self-induced abortion in 2013. She was released after a year when a judge overturned her conviction.

Time and again Pence has voted in Congress to completely defund Planned Parenthood, a non-profit organisation that provides services on reproductive health including abortion.

Strikes

The US has already seen strikes since Trump took office by taxi drivers at JFK airport and Yemeni workers in Brooklyn, New York.

The Women's strike is being called as "a day without a woman". Women are being encouraged to not go to work, or do unpaid and domestic work for one day, to protest against attacks on women's rights and Trump's presidency.

The global Women's Marches were hugely successful.

Now direct action and strikes can build on that success and feed into the movement can beat back Trump's attacks.

More online...

For more articles on Trump and the US go to bit.ly/2lyx8u

Ireland

A VIGIL for Savita Halappanavar in 2012

Movement against deadly law grows with demand for a referendum on it

THE FIGHT for women to win the right to choose is gearing up in Ireland.

The 8th Amendment was established in Ireland in 1983. It says a foetus' life is equal to a woman's, making abortions illegal.

On 8 March—International Women's Day—a women's strike has been called by Strike 4 Repeal to demand a referendum on a woman's right to choose.

The strike has been partly inspired by the "Black Monday" protests in Poland last year, which blocked the government's latest attack on abortion rights.

People Before Profit TD (MP) Brid Smith told Socialist Worker, "Strike 4 Repeal is a phenomena that has taken off because of the fight in Poland.

"It also comes off the back of the campaign for same sex marriage.

"A lot of the tactics and the energy is similar. There is a sense of fightback in the air."

Abortions are only legal in Ireland to save a woman's life.

But the 8th Amendment has resulted in the deaths of women.

The Irish state's list of shame is a long one. In 2012 Savita Halappanavar died after being denied an abortion that would have saved her life.

In 1992 the state detained a 14 year old rape victim known as Ms. X to prevent her travelling to Britain for an abortion.

Women face a 14-year prison sentence for obtaining an abortion in Ireland, but many order the abortion pill illegally anyway. At least ten women travel to Britain every day to access abortions.

Permitted

Even in cases where the baby will not survive outside the womb abortions are still not permitted.

The illegality of abortion disproportionately effects working class women.

The cost of travel and the time taken out of work causes more trauma and stress for women who should have safe access in Ireland.

But resistance is growing and forcing the state

institutions to act. In 2015 the High Court held that the near-blanket ban on abortions breaches human rights legislation.

Strike 4 Repeal spokesperson Claire Brophy said, "We've been overwhelmed and heartened by the support for the strike so far, in particular from students, and from regional and rural groups.

"The enthusiasm around the country has shown us the appetite for action from the government on this issue.

"People want a referendum on the 8th Amendment."

Making abortion illegal does not keep women safe and does not reduce abortions. It puts women at risk because of lack of access to safe procedures.

The government in Ireland has attempted to push a referendum on the issue back by at least a year—claiming that it is not possible to hold it until 2018 at the earliest.

A woman has the right to control her own body.

Socialist Worker stands in solidarity with those fighting for that right.

IN BRIEF

Strikes run aground on Woolwich Ferry

TALKS BETWEEN Woolwich Ferry bosses and the Unite and GMB unions continued this week.

The workers had struck twice over allegations of sexual harassment and management bullying.

Bosses at contractor Briggs Marine operate the south east London Thames river crossing on behalf of Transport for London.

They had planned to strike every Friday until 14 April.

Unite regional organiser Onay Kasab said, "Enough progress was made yesterday for the unions to suspend next Friday's strike.

"But we do reserve the right to take further industrial action should a settlement not be reached."

The unions should not back down unless all their demands are addressed.

Forging resistance to Bifrangi bosses

WORKERS AT a specialist forge in Lincoln began an overtime ban on Monday.

The GMB union members work at Bifrangi (UK) Ltd, who have refused to give workers a pay rise for the last three years.

Workers voted 90 percent for action short of strike and by 60 percent for strike.

Colin Todd, the GMB organiser, said, "The workforce has seen investment in new offices, plush floors and seating and wonder where is their cut."

BMW bosses plan 'pensions robbery'

THE UNITE union has warned BMW bosses that it will call "serious industrial action" if they don't stop their plans to slash workers' pensions.

Workers voted by 96 percent in favour of industrial action in a consultative ballot.

Bosses at the car giant are trying to close the workers "defined benefit" pension scheme. Their attack comes as BMW recorded profits of some £6 billion.

No love for Tory union-bashers

WORKERS WERE set to hold a protest against Tory-run Portsmouth City Council as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

The council is trying to slash union reps' facility time, which gives them time to do union activity at work.

It wants to halve the facility time budget.

The Unison, Unite and GMB unions organised the protest.

They planned to present Tory council leader Donna Jones with an "I love unions" special Valentine's Day card, filled with messages from union members protesting at her attack.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

Labour assault on libraries

MORE THAN 100 library campaigners packed a council planning committee meeting in Lambeth, south London, last Tuesday.

After sneaking in through the back door to avoid protesters, Labour councillors voted to turn Carnegie Library into a gym at a cost of £3 million.

More than 300 objections were filed against the plan.

This is part of the Labour council's attack on the borough's library service.

The Defend the Ten library campaign supports an alternative plan that would preserve all ten of Lambeth's libraries.

It said, "The council's only reaction has been to plough right on—and to lay on police and 12 security guards at last week's meeting.

"Strangest of all, councillor Jim Dickson argued that the waste of £3 million is necessary because of government funding cuts."

PROTESTING OUTSIDE the council planning meeting in Lambeth in south London

ENVIRONMENT

Climate campaigners to march for refugees

by DAVE SEWELL

CAMPAIGNERS for the environment have vowed to form a block on the Stand Up To Racism demonstrations on 18 March.

They made their decision at a landmark conference on climate refugees, which more than 200 people attended, in London last Saturday.

It was organised by the Campaign Against Climate Change trade union group and Friends of the Earth.

Fences

Asad Rehman from Friends of the Earth warned of a "dystopian future of walls and fences" if solidarity wasn't built across the movement.

On average one person has been displaced every second since 2008 by disasters.

These included floods, droughts, storms and typhoons



Asad Rehman

for those fleeing the effects of climate change.

Workshops dealt with the legal campaign to win such a "climate refugee" status.

Others emphasised that climate change would increase the numbers of people migrating for other more immediate reasons, such as to avoid poverty or join their relatives.

This adds to the case for defending migrants' rights more generally too.

Intention

The TUC and several unions, including the PCS, CWU, TSSA and UCU, supported the conference.

Other organisations, including Stand Up To Racism, also backed it.

The conference's organisers now plan to follow up the event with a training day on the climate and refugees.

● Go to campaignncc.org

OBITUARIES

Danny Jardine
1925-2016

DANNY JARDINE, who has died after a long period of ill health, was a life-long socialist.

During the Second World War, Danny went down the pit as one of the "Bevin Boys", who were conscripted to boost wartime production.

Danny then trained as an electrician, and moved from Glasgow to Chesterfield in the mid-1950s.

He worked for many years at the Electricity Board, where he was an active trade union shop steward.

Danny's political life began in his teens in Glasgow, where he was a regular attender at the Glasgow Green "speakers' corner" where left wing



Danny Jardine

activists would debate and argue for socialism.

Danny first came across the International Socialists, forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in the 1960s. He did not join the party at the time, but he became a subscriber to Socialist Worker newspaper.

Danny joined the SWP at the age of 70 in 1995.

He was won over by the writings of former Socialist Worker editor Chris Harman and Tony Cliff, one of the SWP's founder members.

When Danny said he was too old to join the party, Cliff said he was even older and that we needed more "youngsters in the party".

After joining, Danny became an active and involved member. He retained his commitment to Socialist Worker, and was the linchpin of a highly effective distribution network for the paper for many years.

Our condolences go out to Maggie, Janice, William, Linda, Phil and Joe.

Danny's funeral will be on Wednesday 22 February at 10.30am at Chesterfield Crematorium.

Chesterfield SWP

EDUCATION

UCU UNION

'We need a stronger union' say UCU Left candidates

UCU LEFT candidates are fighting to win big votes in the lecturers' union.

Elections for general secretary, vice president and various positions on the National Executive Committee end on 1 March.

Jo McNeill is challenging incumbent Sally Hunt for general secretary, while Carlo Morelli is standing for vice-president.

Carlo is the health and safety rep at Dundee university. He told Socialist Worker, "We need to have a real fight to defend pay and conditions.

"I believe that the UCU also has a role to play in a wider struggle for social justice and equality."

SCHOOLS

AROUND 180 parents, teachers and campaigners from across Hackney in east London met to discuss the Tories' planned education cuts last Monday.

NUT union general secretary Kevin Courtney told the meeting that funding in the borough will be

Other UCU Left candidates for NEC positions include Mandy Brown, Ioanna Ioannou, Mark Able and Lesley Kane.

■ UCU UNION members at Manchester Metropolitan University lobbied governors over cuts last Friday. Governors confirmed the closure of the university's Crewe campus, in July 2019.

Bosses have refused to rule out compulsory redundancies for the 400 workers at the site.

UCU members at the Crewe and Manchester sites voted last month for the union to ballot for strikes if compulsory redundancies are threatened.

slashed by around £1,000 per pupil by 2020. Local NUT joint secretary Dave Davies pledged that the union would "fight for every job".

The meeting agreed to join in a day of action on 25 February, and to organise a local march.

● More on socialistworker.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Bosses don't learn lesson

THE SCOTTISH FE college lecturers' union, EIS Fela, has declared a new dispute.

It comes after talks with college bosses broke down last week over the agreement reached before last year's Scottish parliament election.

Socialist Worker understands the union's executive has called for a strike ballot.

EIS Fela president John Kelly said the union had hoped for "constructive" talks to deliver "all elements of the agreement" but instead got "obfuscation".

He said, "We took industrial action before to

achieve this pay agreement, and we are fully prepared to take industrial action again."

The lecturers won a stunning victory last March after just one day of striking. They had also put political pressure on the Scottish National Party (SNP) government.

It has been six years since the SNP promised to return to national bargaining for colleges, but bosses are still trying to wriggle out of it.

A potential strike could fall just before the Scottish council elections in May—that will not be good news for the SNP.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

GLASGOW WORKERS protested after the redundancies were announced

Wider action needed after forced sackings

by NICK CLARK

RUTHLESS BOSSES at the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) sacked ten workers—including union reps—by email while they were striking last week.

The ten workers were told they had been made redundant with just a day's notice and were made to clear their desks when they returned to work.

At least two of those made redundant—Finola Kelly from the London office and Zahid Nawaz from Birmingham—were PCS union reps.

PCS members working for EHRC have struck a number of times, including on Thursday of last week, against budget cuts and redundancies.

Zahid said the compulsory redundancy notices were "unprecedented". He

added, "This is clearly targeted action by the employer."

"There is a culture of trade union victimisation in EHRC and this is it coming to a head. The EHRC don't want PCS and Unite in the workplace."

In Birmingham bosses told the other EHRC workers to stay at home while the sacked workers cleared their desks because it would be "upsetting" for them.

Strikes

Workers and their supporters protested outside EHRC offices in Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Cardiff in response to the redundancies.

As many as 200 people joined the protest in Glasgow, including members of other unions—GMB, Unite and Unison.

PCS union general secretary Mark Serwotka said the redundancies were

"reprehensible" and that the union would "continue to fight" them.

PCS president Janice Godrich also said the union would "continue to support these members until justice is restored."

Two further strikes are planned on 10 and 20 March, and two more in April and May.

But it will take a serious escalation to force bosses to reinstate the sacked workers.

Workers in other civil service departments such as the DWP also face redundancies, with office closures threatening jobs.

The PCS has a policy of balloting its members across the civil service if compulsory redundancies are announced. The union should follow this policy now.

●Please send messages of support to londonbargaining@pcs.org.uk

RAIL WORKERS

Why was there no second worker on these trains?

A BALLOT of nearly 1,000 Southern train drivers on a controversial deal to end a dispute over the removal of guards from trains was due to end on Thursday this week.

Aslef union officials have recommended the deal that accepts the extension of driver only operation (DOO).

But some drivers have spoken out against it.

The train guards' union RMT was set to begin talks with Southern bosses this week over its dispute over DOO and the question of how much safety training the "onboard supervisor" role that replaces guards will have.

New figures provided by rail workers and passengers have shown that an average of three trains a day during a recent two-week period did

not even have a second staff member on board.

This is the equivalent of 1,000 journeys a year that any passengers requiring assistance—such as disabled people or older people—would not have received it.

This is despite repeated assurances from bosses that this would not be the case. It is also supposedly a key element to the deal struck with Aslef officials.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "Our members think instances of driver-only trains are increasing."

RMT is now also in dispute with Arriva Rail North and preparing to ballot for industrial action over its failure to guarantee the future of the safety-critical role of the guard during a recent meeting.

ABORTION RIGHTS

New challenges in the battle for abortion rights

by SARAH BATES

UP TO 60 activists from across Britain came together for the Abortion Rights AGM and public meeting on Saturday.

The meeting was addressed by Dilys Cossey from the Abortion Law Reform Association, human rights campaigning lawyer Caoilfhionn Gallagher, and speakers from Abortion Rights.

A key focus of the discussion was how to support the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment in Ireland (see page 17) and how to mobilise against US president Donald Trump.

There was also discussion about how to ensure women in Northern Ireland could receive

the NHS abortion services they are entitled to.

A trade unionist from Camden Unison talked about raising funds for Abortion Rights through her union branch.

2017 is an important year for reproductive justice as campaigners celebrate 50 years since the 1967 Act that legalised abortion.

They are also organising how to protect and extend a woman's right to choose today.

At the meeting there was a real focus on unity among activists. It was an inspiring meeting setting up the challenges and opportunities for the year ahead.

●Go to abortionrights.org.uk to get involved

HOUSING

Fight against eviction threatened by a charity

by JOEL HIRSCH

LOCAL housing campaigners gathered last Thursday and on Monday of this week as East London Unite union community branch protested on behalf of a tenant facing eviction.

Osmond James has lived at a hostel run by the charity Branches for over two years since becoming homeless.

The charity expects him to find a permanent home.

But soaring prices, huge deposits and high rents make it very difficult.

He is now threatened with eviction.

Supporters from Unite met the charity last week to put the case that the eviction should be stopped.

But the charity appears to be more interested in meeting turnover targets for funding from the local council.

Unite is funding local unemployed centres so that people can organise at community and local level.

Osmond is part of the Stand up for Your Rights campaign group that Unite is spearheading.

AXE THE HOUSING ACT

Now step up the pressure after another Tory attack

AXE THE Housing Act campaign activists are meeting this weekend to plan the next stages in the campaign against the Housing and Planning Act.

They will also discuss the response to the Tories' new Housing White Paper, released last week.

The new legislation includes measures by the Tories to drop a key part of the Housing and Planning Act—compulsory starter homes targets. As the

government moves towards implementing the Act, set to be in effect by April, the campaign will plan the next March for Homes. Last year's brought 10,000 people onto the streets.

●Saturday 18 February, 11am-1pm, Unite offices, 128 Theobalds Road London, WC1X 8TN.

●A screening of a film about the 1960 St Pancras rent strike takes place at the Marx Memorial Library in London on 23 February at 7pm.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Copeland council strikers confront the fat cat mayor

WORKERS AT Copeland Council in Cumbria who work in services including benefits, revenues and customer services were set to strike on Thursday of this week over the impact of service cuts made by Independent mayor Mike Starkie.

Many workers have been made redundant over the past two months. Their union Unison said this is causing stress for remaining workers and delays for benefit claimants, and is storing up future problems for the council.

Workers held a half-day strike in December.

Unison organiser Jenny



Striking in December

Martin said, "Starkie is not employing enough staff to do the job and there is an urgent need for more resources.

"While council staff have seen their real wages fall in recent years, Mayor Starkie has enjoyed a 67 percent pay rise since he became mayor."

Scandalous texts expose care cuts

‘Gentleman’s agreement’ shames cabinet that slashed social care, reports **Raymie Kiernan**

TORY MINISTERS made a dodgy deal to increase social care funding with the leader of a Tory-run county council that includes several top MPs’ constituencies.

Virtually every public body responsible for social care has sounded the alarm about a crisis driven by Tory cuts. So have private bodies with interests to protect.

Social care is funded through local councils, hit hard by austerity.

So Theresa May hopes to buy time by giving favours to her own.

Surrey County Council’s Tory leader David Hodge had planned a referendum to increase council tax by 15 percent to fund social care.

But leaked text messages from Hodge suggest that extra funding was made available in return for calling off the vote.

He said that a “gentleman’s agreement” was reached after a call with local government minister Sajid Javid, who then conferred with chancellor Philip Hammond.

Hammond is one of several top Tories whose seats are in Surrey, along with health secretary Jeremy Hunt, transport secretary Chris Grayling and backstabbing backbencher Michael Gove.

Last week Labour leader

FIGURE IT OUT

Government auditors said the Tories’ flagship health and social care integration strategy is in a mess. Their report last week showed that a lack of available social care is driving more people to hospital and stopping them leaving

87,000

The number of emergency admissions to hospitals was meant to go down by 106,000 last year. Instead it went up by 87,000

185,000

The number of patients discharged late from hospital was meant to go down by 293,000. Instead it went up by 185,000

Jeremy Corbyn skewered May in parliament over the apparent “sweetheart deals” to alleviate the pressure on Tory councils.

Some 300,000 fewer people receive council-funded care than four years ago, and 1.2 million don’t get the care they need.

Problem

It’s now a year since the chairs of three Tory-dominated select committees called for action to address the “widely recognised” problem.

But the Tories’ solution is to make us pay with a 3 percent “social care precept” on council tax—well short of what is needed.

Social care cuts have fed into the NHS crisis—as a new report underlines (see box). One in ten NHS trusts say

their hospitals are at unsafe levels of overcrowding.

As Corbyn argued, “A major cause of the pressure on A&Es is the £4.6 billion cuts in the social care budget since 2010.”

May claimed these were “alternative facts”.

But millionaire Tories will never have to worry about being looked after, unlike the people whose care they are cutting.

The Local Government Association has warned, “The current funding crisis risks creating an unfair, unequal, two-tiered care system where only the well-off will be able to get the care they need.”

Labour councils have been hit five times harder by cuts than Tory authorities, but their opposition to Tory austerity has been weak.

Even under Corbyn the Tories are being let off the hook.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell promised a national fight over council cuts in late 2015. But we’ve seen little beyond a “vote Labour” strategy.

People are right to ask why Labour councils aren’t fighting back much harder against attacks on workers and services.

NHS



CAMPAIGNERS OUTSIDE Ealing town hall last week protesting against planned cuts

Take heart from hospital protests

ANGER AT TORY
attacks on the NHS
is fuelling protests to
beat them back.

Over 1,000 people marched to defend children’s heart services at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester last Saturday, chanting, “Save our Glenfield, save our kids”.

NHS England announced a consultation to axe the unit by April.

Bosses say the unit does not meet clinical standards, but campaigners slammed this as a smokescreen.

Kirsten Lynch came with her daughter Poppy, who’d had open heart surgery at Glenfield. “The surgeons did a tremendous job and the results have been excellent,” she said.

“I don’t know if that would have been the same

outcome if we’d had to travel up to three hours further.”

Local groups are organising against the 44 regional Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) that would axe hundreds of hospital departments and services across England.

Defence

Health campaigners in west London organised an open-top bus tour of local hospitals last Saturday, to build support for a national demo in defence of the NHS on 4 March.

A growing number of local councils are refusing to sign off on the STPs.

Stephen Cowan, Labour leader of Hammersmith and Fulham council, joined campaigners at Charing Cross Hospital.

He told Socialist Worker, “Not only is the plan wrong, it is part of an attack on the whole NHS.”

“We’re one of the first councils to say, ‘No, full stop’ to the local STP. Councillors have a crucial role to play in this fight.”

Called by Health Campaigns Together, the demonstration is now backed by the Unison, Unite and GMB unions and the People’s Assembly.

Other trade unions and the Labour Party should support and build the demonstrations.

As Jim from the west London campaign told Socialist Worker, “Right across the country campaigns are springing up. We want to use 4 March to galvanise and bring all these people together.”



Chancellor Philip Hammond with Surrey council leader David Hodge



On other pages

Truth behind the scares on “health tourism” >> 10&11